

CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Turkey/Israel

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1. The Jews in Turkey are organizing courses in Hebrew in the synagogues to supplement the short course at the Jewish Lycee, the only other Hebrew course that is taught in Turkey. The courses will be conducted in French and can be considered as a partial revival of the Jewish Alliance schools which existed in the Ottoman days. This development marks an attempt to awaken Zionist feeling, and is specially aimed at the young Jews in Turkey. The courses, which are beginning to be well attended, are defined as religious instruction in order to side-step the necessity to obtain special authorization from the Ministry of Education in Ankara.
2. The Jewish community in Istanbul has suggested taking collections for the benefit of the State of Israel, but this has been vetoed by an order from Tel Aviv, as it might disturb the Turkish Government. Because Ankara would never authorize sending such funds to a state which Turkey does not recognize, they would have to be transmitted through the black market. The idea of organizing women for bandage-making has been suppressed on the same grounds. Recently, however, a young Jewish swindler tried to collect funds for Palestine, and a special agent from the Irgun Zvai Leumi went to Istanbul to investigate. The man was caught and beaten, but was not turned over to the Turkish authorities.
3. Relations between the Jews in Turkey and those in Palestine are becoming closer, and it is hoped by the Jews that Turkey will recognize Israel. Abraham Meyer is still preparing to become Chargé d'Affaires for Israel in Turkey and will move to Ankara if this should happen. Source believes, however, that Turkey will be among the last countries to recognize Israel. 25X1A
Comment. An A. A. Meyer was reported in May 1948 to be a representative of the Jewish Agency in Istanbul and to be employed by the Istanbul branch of the Ottoman Bank. His function was said to be the handling of applications for legal entry into Israel.)
4. A plan for sending Turkish Jews to Palestine is being discussed, and the Turkish Government is not expected to object, as it is interested in reducing the number of Jews in Turkey, and since it would be understood that no such departing Jew could ever return to Turkey. Many Jews, who are now living in misery in the Haskoy, Balat, and Kuzguncuk districts of Istanbul, would like to make a new start in Palestine. However, the Jewish Agency will attempt to exercise selection in granting entry visas, which will bar the lazy, the incompetent, and those who have nothing to contribute to the future development of Israel.

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